

ELK NECK STATE PARK



**CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE
PADDLE**

2019

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Welcome to Elk Neck State Park! Your quest will take place at the **Rogues Harbor Boat Launch area**, accessible off of MD-272. Instructions to complete the quest will be provided to you at check in. To get to the Boat Launch, follow MD-272 south into the park. Turn left onto Rogues Harbor Road. Park in the lower parking lot near the store.

Be sure to have your passport ready to show the attendants at the contact stations. Enjoy!



Choose Your Own Adventure Paddle Directions

1. Read the introduction page of your guide (page 3). It will introduce you to your quest.
2. **Read the paddle waiver thoroughly before you begin the quest!** A copy has been provided online so you can either print it beforehand and bring it with you or read over it for your reference. Make sure to sign the waiver and hand it in before you leave the shore. Leave all materials that could get damaged in your locked vehicle or with a trusted friend or family member who is not going on the quest.
3. When you have signed all waivers, please talk to a staff member about getting your boats and safety gear issued to you. Once you are ready to go, carry your boats and the Quest Pack to the sandy, soft launch outside of the store.
4. Begin by paddling forward, backward, right, and left to become acquainted with your boat and paddling partner(s). When it is safe to cross by the boat launch, head towards the Beaver Marsh and your first location on the water trail map.
5. Continue along the shoreline and follow your map to each marked location. Each location has a corresponding page in this workbook, so make sure to open to the appropriate page when you are at the locations. They are color coded for your convenience.
6. When you have reached the last marked location and are prompted to return to shore, please make your way back to the same location from where you launched.
7. Collect all of the boats and safety gear to return to the store. Once you have done so, you will have one (1) more page in your workbook to look at. This page will help you pick which program you will complete to obtain your stamp.
8. Once you have completed your self-guided program, you will receive your stamp. Return all materials you received.

Congratulations!!

Hope you enjoyed your quest!

Welcome to Elk Neck State Park! Today you are going to venture into a quest that not only explores the banks of the Elk River by boat, but also allows you to choose your own adventure.

Would you rather spend a day on the water looking for Bald Eagles or hiking along a marsh trail listening to the sounds of chirping birds? Or maybe you would rather use locally harvested trees to build camper cabins or create habitat areas with a newly acquired tract of land? Your team will follow a water trail map to six (6) marked locations along the shoreline of the Elk River, between the Rogues Harbor Boat Launch and the Elk River Campground. Once your location is in view, flip to the corresponding page in your workbook. These pages will pose questions or hypothetical situations. It will be your decision how your team wants to handle each - there are no wrong choices!

Once you return to shore, your decisions along the paddle will determine which of a number of short, self-guided programs you need to complete in order to get your stamp. The last page of this workbook provides a key. Use it to access the large program box and to determine which numbered program to pull out and complete. Your stamp will be locked inside the large program box and accessible once you complete the program. Make sure to put everything back and lock it up once you have retrieved your stamp.

**To begin your Quest you will need your Quest Pack,
which contains the following:**

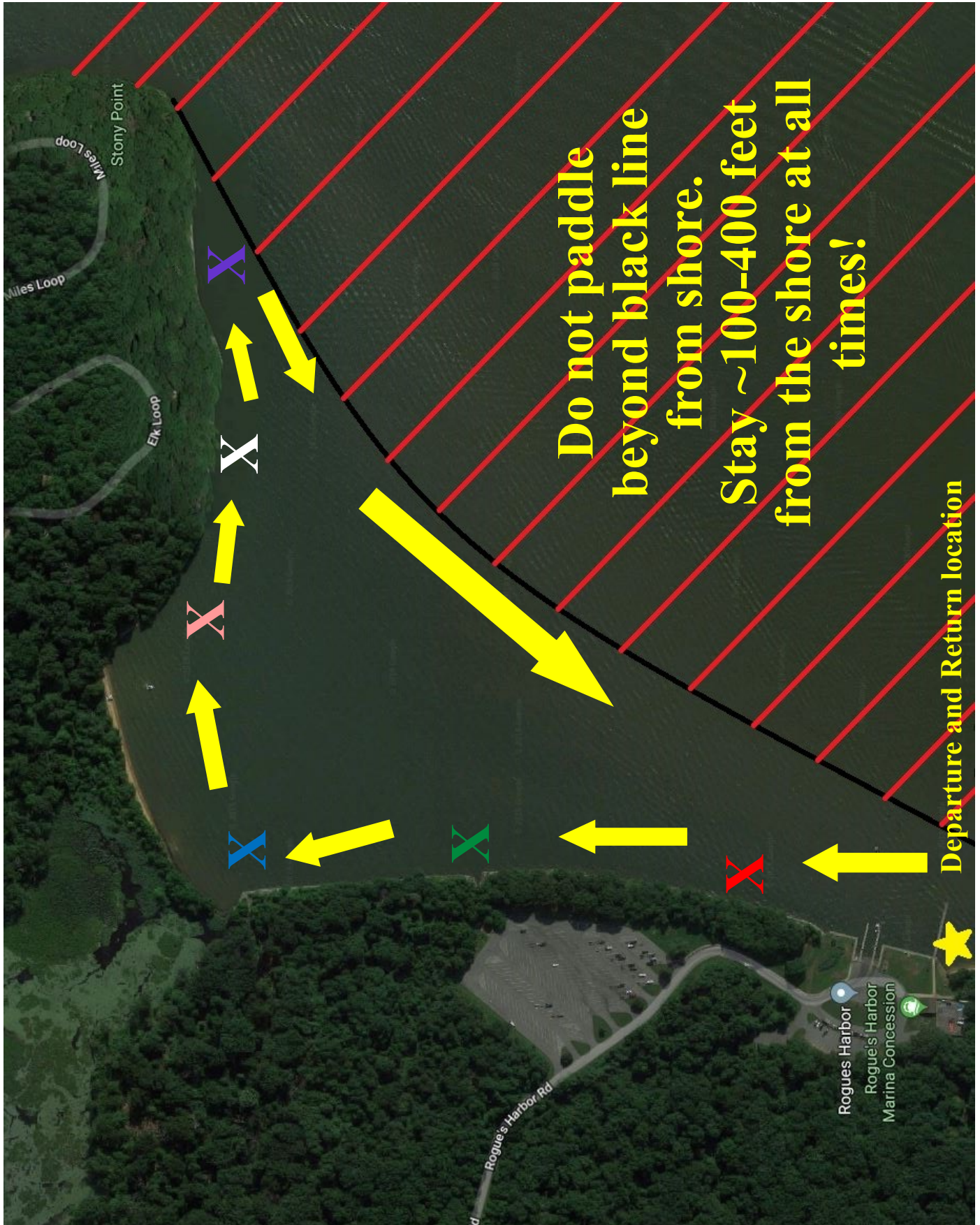
Park Quest Workbook
Binoculars
Dry Erase Marker (for taking notes)

***Remember to grab your own drinking water, sunscreen, bug
spray, and waterproof camera!***

Good luck!

Use this workbook to help you along your quest.

Water Map



Did You See That?

Enjoying the scenery while you paddle? You can thank the Park Rangers and community of the past for deciding to conserve such a beautiful and important landscape. The peninsula of Elk Neck was once covered by farmland to produce the food and grow the livestock necessary for the survival of its inhabitants. As the land has changed over time, you can now see trees cover the peninsula. These trees provide important habitat for many animals, giving a source of food, water, and shelter for survival.

Now here comes your first tough choice. Remember, come to a decision together as a team and choose only one answer. There is a sign along the shoreline that has a red background and four (4) options. If you cannot get close enough to read the sign completely, use your binoculars to help you.

Birding is a beloved pastime of many people. The tranquility that comes with hearing birds of all types chirp, sing, or call is like none other. What's your favorite way to watch birds enjoying their natural habitat? Fill in below the letter of your choice from the sign and then continue paddling to your next stop.

This Land Is Your Land

The Elk River, where you are paddling right now, is a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay. The water is constantly flowing and feeding into the Bay, and it moves with it anything it can carry.

If you look down into the water right now you will see some underwater plants. These plants serve many purposes - they hold the river bed in place, they provide important habitat for many animal species, and they help to keep the water in the river clean, among other roles. The more grasses and plants that the river and Bay have, the healthier the animals and water will be.

To protect these plants, Elk Neck and other state parks try to educate visitors of their importance. But sometimes it takes more than just education to help. Sometimes it is important to decide how to best help the plants in the river to grow and survive. Your team needs to make a decision now.

Fill in below the letter of your choice from the sign and then continue paddling to your next stop.

Water Everywhere!

Water is essential to life. Every living thing needs water to survive. It is very easy right now for you to see that water is surrounding you; but it is found everywhere you go, from rainwater to oceans, lakes, rivers, and ponds, and even underground. Most of Maryland State Parks have some access to water and this is not a coincidence. For generations, water has been the focal point for civilizations and a place for people to gather. It sustains life.

When designing parks, it is important to provide access to water while respecting the fact that it needs to remain clean and free from human impact as much as possible. Elk Neck State Park is surrounded by water and provides many points where visitors can interact with the water in various ways.

Take a look at the sign at this stop and as a team choose your favorite way to enjoy access to the water surrounding Elk Neck State Park. Fill in below the letter of your choice from the sign and then continue paddling to your next stop.

Campfire Stories

Most of the visitors to Elk Neck are people who come to camp. But campgrounds are slightly more complex than you might think. They need to have water and bathrooms, some sites need to have electricity, there need to be trees to provide shade, but open space for people to set up camping equipment, and many other considerations. Before developing a campground, a lot of factors must be considered.

Your team is now faced with a scenario.

You have just been given a piece of land that everyone in the community is talking about. It has breathtaking water views, it has a healthy forest to provide shade and habitat for many species, it has an old, abandoned stone foundation from a house built in the 1800s, and it also has the terrain perfect for a small trail system. Check out the sign at this stop and select what your team will do with this land. Fill in below the letter of your choice from the sign and then continue paddling to your next stop.

Teach Me!

As Park Rangers, an important part of the role is to educate visitors about Elk Neck. Have you ever been to a campfire story, visited the Nature Center, or participated in an educational program at the park?

Park Quest is one of the programs enjoyed by many of our visitors. We hope you learn a little bit about Maryland's resources as you enjoy your quest, but we also hope to learn from you. Visitors are the reason that Maryland State Parks exist and whatever draws you to the park is an important part of its design and what is showcased.

If you were a Park Ranger, what would you showcase about Elk Neck? As a team, look at the sign at this stop and select what it is you are most interested in. Fill in below the letter of your choice from the sign and then continue paddling to your next stop.

Native Species

As you might already know, there are certain species of animals and plants that have been a part of Elk Neck's habitat for hundreds of years - oak trees, white-tailed deer, paw paw fruit, and many others. These species are known as native species. There are, however, certain species that are not originally from this area that have been introduced - stink bugs, stilt grasses, honeysuckle bushes. These introduced, or invasive, species are named as such because they invade an area. In order to keep a diverse and healthy landscape, native species need to flourish and have room to expand. Unfortunately, most invasive species are able to grow and outlive the native ones, trading diverse landscapes for unvarying ones wherever they are. One example of this at Elk Neck State Park is Japanese Stilt Grass.

There is a large amount of Japanese Stilt Grass growing on the peninsula. In order to provide a healthy habitat for the animals and plants that call Elk Neck home, stilt grasses need to be minimized or removed completely. Once that is done, the forest floor will have more space for native trees, shrubs, bushes, and grasses to grow. It is difficult to completely remove the stilt grasses because they grow and spread so easily, but it is not impossible. After the grass begins to diminish, it is time to plant and protect native species in its place.

Take a look at the sign at this stop and pick what you would most like to replace the stilt grass with. Fill in below the letter of your choice from the sign. This is your last stop on the water trail! Flip the page for instructions on the next portion of your quest. Enjoy the paddle along the way!

Now enjoy your paddle back to the Rogues Harbor Boat Launch. Make sure to safely cross the boat launch and return to the sandy shoreline where you started. Once you have returned to shore, contact a staff member and they will help you return the boats and all safety gear. But your quest is not over yet.

Use the key on the next page to figure out which specially designed program is for you based on your choices. If you need help, just ask!



Program Key

In order to select which program you will now complete, you will need to find your answers from pages 6, 8, and 9. Write them down in order below. The code to get into the program boxes was provided to you at check-in. When you have completed your program and received your stamp, please make sure to return all items to the program box and place that back into the larger box where you got it. Please don't forget to lock it back up when you are done so the next family can enjoy the quest!

6

8

9

Now find your combination below and ask for that number program.

Program 1 - AAC, ACC

Program 2 - ABC, ADC

Program 3 - AAB, ABB, ACB, ADB

Program 4 - BAB, BBB, BCB, BDB

Program 5 - AAA, ABA, ACA, ADA

Program 6 - BAA, BBA, BCA, BDA

Program 7 - AAD, ABD, ACD, ADD

Program 8 - BAD, BBD, BCD, BDD

Program 9 - BAC, BBC, BCC, BDC